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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board
P.O. Box 69060
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17106

Dear Members of the Board:

As a United States Senator who calls western Pennsylvania home, I am submitting this letter to you at your public hearing in Pittsburgh today to express my opinion on the award of the pending Pittsburgh gaming license. I appreciate the opportunity to submit this document as a form of written testimony to be entered into the evidentiary record along with the many others who submitted comments at today's hearings.

By expanding the aging and outdated convention center, the region was able to attract new and larger conventions to the city, bringing with them first time visitors. Coupled with the additions of a world class baseball park and football field on the North Side, the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have witnessed the rebirth of our City's North Shore with vibrant new entertainment venues, newly constructed offices and hotel accommodations and filled the ever-present need for additional parking near our city. Our city has even attracted this year's Major League Baseball All-Star Game in part because of the remarkable venue PNC Park is for playing professional baseball. This will translate into millions in economic and tourism impact for the region.

All of this expansion and renovation came at a steep public cost topping out in the hundreds of millions of dollars. However, we are now on the eve of a similar opportunity – but one that will bear little to no public cost.

There are two very important reasons for me writing you today. Before I begin, I would like to make clear that **I am not endorsing or supporting any particular gaming applicant but I am endorsing any gaming plan through which funding can be secured for a new arena without the use of tax dollars.**

As I've said publicly in the past, I believe the gaming license is a **public license** and therefore some portion of revenues derived from the award of the license should be used for public purposes. The opportunity for our region to build a new arena and redevelop a struggling area of Pittsburgh with some of these funds remains a top priority for many civic leaders.

In addition, replacing the outdated Mellon Arena with a new, expanded facility demonstrates continued investment in our community. It will provide another venue for attracting greater conventions and civic events, secure the Pittsburgh Penguins future, and will create and retain hundreds of jobs above and beyond those predicted for each casino project.

Thank you again for your kind consideration of this letter. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me individually, or as a Board, at my Pittsburgh regional office at 412.562.0533.

Sincerely,


Rick Santorum
United States Senator

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